

# **THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD**

## Romans 8:29-30

- *Those whom God **foreknew** He also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son... Those whom He **predestined** He also **called**...those whom he **called** He also **justified**...those those whom He **justified** he also **glorified** (8:29-30)*
- *What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the **elect** did. The others were hardened (11:7)*

# Basis for Election: *Foreknowledge*

- Humans: Acts 26:5 and 2 Pet. 3:17 – “to know before” in the sense of having prior knowledge with which to base decisions
- God: Acts 2:23; Rom. 11:2; 1 Pet. 1:2, 20 – When God is subject of passage “foreknow” means “to enter into a relationship before” or “choose to determine before; to foreordain.”
- It’s not simply that God knows what people will do; rather, He foreknows *them* intimately

# Foreknowledge

- NOT that God looked ahead and knew we would receive Christ—then chose us. If so, salvation would begin with our faith before our birth! Yet,
- The natural, sinful man is at war with God (Rom. 5:10; 8:7; Eph. 2:3; Col. 1:21)... “A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Cor. 2:14)... “The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4).

# John's Gospel

- Jesus said, “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out” (John 6:37)... “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day” (6:44)... “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him” (6:65)... “You did not choose me, but I chose you...” (15:16).

- New life through the blood of Christ does not come from “the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13).
- Not even faith originates with the believer but with God: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast” (Eph. 2:8–9).

- Christians are “chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Pet 1:1-2).
- Peter also used “foreknowledge” for Christ, “fore-known before the foundation of the world” (1:20).
- So, believers were foreknown in the same way Christ was foreknown—both being predetermined choices of God.
- Hence, foreknowledge is the knowing of predetermined intimate relationship: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you” (Jer. 1:5)... “I am the good shepherd; and I know My own” (John 10:14).

# The Granville Sharp Rule

- Two nouns separated by “and” (Gr. *kai*) and only one “the” that precedes the first noun means that the nouns are synonymous.
- Peter: “This Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of God-less men and put Him to death” (Acts 2:23).
- Conclusion: foreknowledge and foreordain are synonymous. God didn’t just foreknow who would be saved, He foreordained their salvation.

- *Foreknowledge* connotes fore-love. God has a predetermined divine love for those He plans to save.
- **Foreknew** often carries the idea of special intimacy and is frequently used of a love relationship (cf. Gen. 4:17)—the same word translated “chosen” in Amos 3:2, where the Lord says to Israel, “You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth.” God “knew” Israel in the unique sense of having predetermined that she would be His chosen people.
- Joseph “kept [Mary] a virgin” in that he literally, “did not know her” (Matt. 1:25).

# Those God Does Not Know...

- “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’ ” (Matt 7:21–23).
- Of believers, Paul says, “The Lord knows those who are His” (2 Tim. 2:19).

# Conclusion to Foreknowledge

- **2 Timothy 1:9:** “God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.”

# Acts of the Apostles

- 2:23-24 – [Jesus] was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge
- 4:27-28 – Herod & Pontius Pilate met together...  
“to conspire against...Jesus...to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.”
- 13:48 – “the Gentiles...were glad...and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.”
- 16:14 – “the Lord opened Lydia’s heart to respond to Paul’s message.”

# When He Did It:

- *“Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will” (Ephesians 1:4–5).*

# Who Benefits From It:

- Those whom God wrote into His book... *“All who dwell on the earth will worship [the Beast], everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain”* (Revelation 13:8).

# God Brings the Dead to Life

- *“But God...even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”*  
(Ephesians 2:5–6).

- **Romans 9:11–13** — for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, “THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.” Just as it is written, “JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.”

- **Romans 9:16** — So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.
- **Romans 10:20** — And Isaiah is very bold and says, “I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME, I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME.”

- **1 Corinthians 1:27–29** — but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God.

- *Choice made before the foundation of world:*
- **Ephesians 1:4** — just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.
- **2 Timothy 1:9** — who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

- ***Names of those chosen written in a book before the earth's foundations were laid:***
- **Revelation 13:8; 17:8** — All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.... And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

- **Acts 13:48** — When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.
- **Acts 18:27** — And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace,
- **Philippians 1:29** — For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

- **Philippians 2:12–13** — So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.
- **1 Thessalonians 1:4–5** — knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you; for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

- **2 Thessalonians 2:13–14** — But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- **James 2:5** — Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

- Faith & good works confirms one's election:
- **2 Peter 1:5–11**— ...applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence... knowledge... self-control... perseverance... godliness... brotherly kindness... love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

# Election Precedes Salvation

- **Romans 11:7** — What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;
- **2 Timothy 2:10** — For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.
- **Acts 13:48** — When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

# God's Sovereign Mercy

- **Exodus 33:19** — “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.”
- **Deuteronomy 7:6–7** —the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,

- **Matthew 20:15** — ‘Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?’ (cf. Rom 9:10-24)
- **Romans 11:4–6** — But what is the divine response to him? “I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL.” In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

# Sovereignty Over All Things

- **1 Chronicles 29:10–12:** David said...“Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. “Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone.

- **Job 42:1–2:** Then Job answered the LORD and said, “I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.
- **Psalm 115:3:** But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.
- **Psalm 135:6:** Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

- **Isaiah 14:24, 27:** The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, “Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand... “For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?”

- **Isaiah 46:9–11:** “Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’; Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.

- **Isaiah 55:11:** ...My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.
- **Jeremiah 32:17:** Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You,
- **Daniel 4:35:** “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’ ”

- The unenlightened fret, the unsaved revile, but the rest give glory to God...
- **Romans 11:33–36:** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.